

# City of Taunton

Department of Human Services

## Council on Aging

Anne C. Bisson, Director

Tracy Heger, Senior Center Coordinator



### **STANDARD GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES OFFERED BY THE TAUNTON COUNCIL ON AGING**

30 Olney Street

Taunton, MA 02780

Phone 508-821-1425/508-821-1420

Fax 508-821-1444

## **Forward**

Programs and activities of the Taunton Council on Aging, under the auspices of the City of Taunton Department of Human Services, are designed and targeted to elders sixty (60) years of age or older who are residents of the City of Taunton.

## **Mission Statement**

The Department of Human Services/Taunton Council on Aging is a comprehensive program of activities designed to satisfy the physical, social, economic, recreational and psychological needs of the citizens of Taunton.

## **Eligibility**

### **Age**

The minimum age requirement to participate in Taunton Council on Aging/Senior Center activities is 60.

### **Residency**

Taunton Council on Aging/Senior Center Activities are for residents of the City of Taunton unless otherwise stated.

### **Health**

Participants of programs and activities offered by the Taunton Council on Aging/Senior Center must be responsible for personal care i.e., hygiene, toileting, continence, cleanliness, feeding, and dressing. The Taunton Council on Aging is not responsible for providing assistance with personal care. Participants are urged to arrange for personal companions if they need special assistance in their daily routines, including personal and medical care.

As stated within the Americans with Disabilities Act under Title III, Regulation 36.302 (a) "A public accommodation shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to afford goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations to individuals with disabilities, unless the public accommodation can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages or accommodations.

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, a public accommodation is not required to provide its customers, clients, or participants with personal devices, such as wheelchairs; individually prescribed devices, such as prescription eyeglasses or hearing aids; or services of a personal nature including assistance in eating, toileting or dressing.

## **Hours of Operation**

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday	8:00 AM — 4:00 PM
Tuesday	8:00 AM — 7:00 PM
Friday	8:00 AM — 12:00 PM

The Department of Human Services, Taunton, Council on Aging and Senior Center are closed on the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Good Friday, Patriots' Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Please note that the Taunton Council on Aging only operates a half day on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. Office hours may vary during holiday weeks; please check posted business hours when holidays are approaching.

Please be advised the computer room closes 30 minutes prior to the office closing.

### **Standard Guidelines for Participation**

Participants of Programs and Activities offered by the Taunton Council Aging/Senior Center must:

- 1) Have a clear understanding of common courtesy while interacting with other participants and staff and respect for their property and for the building and its contents. Harassment of any kind, violence or threatening behaviors are not permitted.
- 2) Not disturb or disrupt individuals, programs or activities offered by the Taunton Council on Aging/Senior Center; refrain from bringing alcohol or illegal substances on the property and refrain from inebriated and problematic behavior. Problem behavior which either consciously or unconsciously violates or restricts the rights of others to use the Taunton Council on Aging/Senior Center programs and activities is not acceptable behavior.
- 3) Be responsible for their own supervision, capable of independent decision making and be reasonably oriented to surroundings at and around Taunton Council on Aging/Senior Center Programs and Activities (unless accompanied by a personal companion.)
- 4) Be responsible for own health care, i.e., medications, special diets, medical appointments, emergency provisions. The Taunton Council on Aging/Senior Center is not responsible for providing assistance with medications and other personal health and medical care.
- 5) Adhere to Taunton Council on Aging/Senior Center policies regarding health codes, sexual or other types of harassment, appropriate dress and weapons possession.

Continued on next page

## **Standard Guidelines for Participation Continued**

If inappropriate behavior is witnessed or reported, administrative staff will use discretion to take corrective action which could include the request to refrain from the inappropriate behavior inclusive of an explanation of the infraction, expulsion from activities until further notice and, if deemed necessary, police involvement.

**Appeals Process:** If an elder wishes to appeal any section of the “Standard Guidelines for Participation” they shall put their request in writing to the Chairman of the Board of the Department of Human Services. If an individual is unable to provide a written statement, a voice taped statement will be acceptable.

### **Program Participation Policy**

Due to the popularity of Taunton Council on Aging’s Senior Center Programs it is necessary to maintain waiting lists for participation in certain programs. To uphold fairness to participants as well as those on the waiting list, all activities are on a first come first served basis. If there is no vacancy in a requested class, staff will make every effort, if available, to suggest an alternate class to attend as you wait for the requested activity. It is every participants responsibility to inform staff if they will be absent, especially for an extended period of time. We suggest that if you are unable to contact us that you have a family member or friend call to inform us of your absence to avoid removal from an activity. If an individual who is on the active roster for a program misses eight (8) consecutive weeks, without notification as why you are unable to attend, they will be removed from the active roster to allow those on the wait list an opportunity to participate. Special circumstances will be reviewed on a case by case basis. If you have a planned absence for longer than four (4) months we may request that you vacate your active slot for someone on the wait list; this may result in placement on the waiting list upon your return. If you decide at any time you no longer wish to participate in a program please let staff know so that we may contact those on the wait list.

**Appeals Process:** If at any time you are removed from a program and wish to appeal the decision you may do so in writing to the Chairman of the Department of Human Services. If an individual is unable to provide a written statement, a voice taped statement will be acceptable.

### **Program Cancellation Policy**

If Taunton Public Schools are closed due to adverse weather conditions all programs at the Taunton Senior Center are cancelled; if you have an appointment please call the office to inquire if your appointment is cancelled. If the City of Taunton’s municipal offices (City Hall) are closed the offices of the Department of Human Services/Council on Aging/Senior Center will also be closed.

### **Smoking Policy**

The Department of Human Services/Council on Aging offices and the Senior Center are located on Taunton Housing Authority Property; as of October 1, 2013, the Taunton Housing Authority instituted a no smoking policy at this location. This policy prohibits the combustion of any cigarette, cigar, pipe, and other products containing any amount of tobacco or like substance, including marijuana, medical marijuana, hookah, e-cigarettes or any derivative thereof on the grounds which includes the building, lawn, courtyard, walkways, parking lot and within twenty-five (25) feet of all entrances.

### **Informed Consent – Fitness Programs**

All individuals participating in a fitness class (yoga, aerobic dance, fitness 101, etc.) at the Senior Center must review and sign an informed consent form prior to the start of the first class. Consent forms are available at the Information and Referral window.

### **Accidents/Illness/Injury**

Should a participant in a Taunton Council on Aging program become incapacitated, 911 will be called as a precautionary measure to assure the well being of the participant. Emergency contacts should be listed on your member intake form and in case of an emergency the person listed will be contacted. If you should need to change your emergency contact for any reason please inquire at the Information and Referral window.

### **Personal Property**

The Department of Human Services/Council on Aging and the Senior Center encourage all those visiting or participating in a program at the Senior Center to be aware of any or all personal belongings. The Department of Human Services/Council on Aging and the Senior Center is not responsible for any lost, damaged or stolen articles. If you find an item that you believe someone has lost, please contact someone in the main office for assistance.

### **Safety Protocol**

If for any reason it is deemed necessary to evacuate or lock down the Senior Center we ask all those present in the center to follow any and all direction from law enforcement and staff.

### **Copy Machine/Fax Machine Policy**

Only authorized users of the Department of Human Services/Taunton Council on Aging may operate the copy/fax machines. The authorized users may copy/fax client and/or service information only for the purposes of application completion, i.e., fuel assistance, health insurance, and for program and activities in the Senior Center. Limited copying may also be permitted at the discretion of the administration.

## **Monthly Newsletter**

The Taunton Council on Aging/Senior Center publishes a monthly newsletter to inform the community of upcoming events. The newsletter is available at the Taunton Council on Aging/Senior Center as well as at multiple agencies, businesses and municipal offices throughout the city. For further information on where you can pick up a newsletter please contact the office at 508-821-1425.

Program information can also be found on our Facebook page **Taunton Council on Aging/Department of Human Services**



## **Computer Room and WIFI**

The Council on Aging realizes that lifelong learning requires information-gathering skills. In the information age, the acquisition of these skills demands the ability to access information electronically. The Taunton Council on Aging is pleased to offer elders the opportunity to utilize computers, access the internet and take advantage of our WIFI service. Prior to using the computers or WIFI, participants must sign the Taunton Council on Aging Computer and Training Center's Computer and Internet Policy. In addition, all computer time must be scheduled to assure the computer room is available for public use. For further information please see a receptionist.

## **Drop In Center Lunch Program**

Monday – Friday at 11:15 a.m., Bristol Elder Services' Nutrition Program provides an on site lunch program at the Taunton Council on Aging for seniors 60 years of age and older. This low cost meal (\$2.00 donation) provides the opportunity to explore the programming available at the Taunton Senior Center as well as an opportunity to socialize with others. For more information on the menu and how to sign up for the lunch program please see a receptionist at the Information and Referral Window.

## **Elder Outreach Program**

The City of Taunton's Department of Human Services and the Taunton Council on Aging with funding from the City of Taunton, Executive Office of Elder Affairs and the Office of Economic and Community Development, provides elders sixty (60) years of age and older who reside in the City of Taunton the opportunity to engage in services provided by our Elder Outreach Program. The Elder Outreach Program is a team of professionals who provide bilingual (Portuguese and English) in-home case management and support services, friendly visiting, in home non-invasive nursing services, application completion, advocacy and information and referral.

Our Elder Outreach team is trained to provide a compassionate approach to assist elders with issues they may encounter; one goal is to assist in decreasing the loneliness experienced later in life by providing a network of services and persons who care. The Elder Outreach team urges elder persons who are feeling lonely and/or are facing difficulties to contact them at 508-821-1425. They also encourage individuals of any age to call if they know of an elder who may benefit from the services provided.